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NANOOK OF THE NORTH ✓

By - Robert J. Flaherty. ✓

Nanook, his wife and children, wear their sole wardrobe on their back, carry all their belongings on a dog-sledge and live wherever the search for food takes them. Nanook's hunting grounds are nearly as large as England, yet it is occupied by less than three hundred souls; Throughout that Ungava region Nanook, the Bear, is famous as a great hunter.

Traveling first in his quaint and fragile kayak, covered with sealskins, and then in his omiak, of driftwood frame covered with the hides of seal and walrus in Summer, Nanook and his family go down the river, full of layers of ice floes, to the trade post of the white man and to the Salmon and walrus fishing grounds at sea.

Nanook lures the salmon with two pieces of ivory on a seal-hide line, then spears them and bites them to death. When the sea is free of ice and the salmon gone, they face starvation, but when walrus are found on a far off island, excitement reigns, for the two-ton walrus means a lot of food and therefore, to the Eskimo, wealth. But they are dangerous animals to catch, and the men have a tough struggle before one is harpooned, dragged out of the surf and his raw meat eaten by all, from dogs to nursing babies.

Then comes Winter -- long nights; short, bitter days; the mercury near bottom and staying there for days and days! Then Nanook has only the seal for food, and his air hole in the ice is small and hard to detect. When Nanook's sharp, trained eyes do find it, spearing the "Ogjuk" is a task requiring skill and strength.

In an hour Nanook, with the aid of his family and his ivory knife, cuts blocks of snow and erects his ice igloo, even putting in an ice window. Within where the temperature must never be warmer than freezing, a corner is built for the puppies. Before bedtime Nanook teaches his little son how to use a bow and arrow, and the children slide down the ice hills on their little sleds of driftwood.

When sleep calls them to rest they take off their fur clothes, roll them for pillows and, a naked baby snuggled against a warm, naked back, they huddle under heavy robes. Outside the gale blows the stinging snow about, burying the huskies until only the black tips of their noses show.

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